



2012 GSA ANNUAL MEETING & EXPOSITION

4-7 November | Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

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Paper No. 148-8

Presentation Time: 10:15 AM

JAMES B. THOMPSON, JR.: INNOVATIVE THINKER, BRILLIANT TEACHER

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Jim Thompson was a truly great teacher. Through his many scientific papers he taught generations of mineralogists and petrologists. For those who were lucky enough to attend his classes, formal and informal, his pedagogical brilliance had an everlasting effect. What made his teaching so special? It was not his oratorical skills, for he had a way of mumbling in front of a class. It was not his answers to student questions, which in some cases seemed to bear no relation to the question asked. Jim Thompson's strength was his ability to organize and present ideas based on an understanding of minerals, rocks, and thermodynamics that transcended the topic at hand. He saw similarity and interconnections where others saw differences. He saw logic and order where others saw randomness and chaos. He saw the whole, the forest, where others saw only parts, the trees. His global view made sense out of difficult concepts for struggling students. Jim Thompson appeared to be a renegade, a breaker of rules: negative plotting, exchange components, mineralogical mules, etc. In fact, he very carefully followed the rules of mathematics, geometry, physics, and thermodynamics, using the rules in innovative ways that led to new insights and understanding. He taught us to think outside the box of current practice, but not to neglect the fundamental rules in the process. He did so with grace, with humor, and with kindness to the benefit of us all, his intellectual progeny.

Session No. 148

T132. From Composition and Modal Space, to Biopyriboles, to the Thermodynamics of Metamorphism: The Influence of James B. Thompson, Jr., on Present and Future Mineralogy, Metamorphic Petrology, and Northern Appalachian Geology

Tuesday, 6 November 2012: 8:00 AM-12:00 PM

Charlotte Convention Center 208B

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See more of: [From Composition and Modal Space, to Biopyriboles, to the Thermodynamics of Metamorphism: The Influence of James B. Thompson, Jr., on Present and Future Mineralogy, Metamorphic Petrology, and Northern Appalachian Geology](#)

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